



Whitmer Seeks Alternatives To Gas Tax Pause; Senate Takes No Action

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(DETROIT) – Gov. [Gretchen WHITMER](#) said today her administration is exploring ways to ease high fuel costs other than suspending Michigan's gas tax, but declined when asked whether she would veto a temporary suspension if lawmakers sent one to her desk.

The Senate took no action today on a proposed 90-day pause in the state's 52.4-cent-per-gallon gas tax after Democrats caucused on potential relief. The chamber announced additional session days for Oct. 6 and Oct. 14, but it's not clear that they will take action.

An amended version of Sen. [Kevin HERTEL \(D-St. Clair Shores\)](#)'s [SB 1187](#) had been discussed at the Capitol as a vehicle for the suspension. The proposed amendment did not replace the lost road revenue.

House Speaker [Matt HALL \(R-Richland Township\)](#) nevertheless signaled he would bring the bill to a House vote and move it to the governor if it cleared the Senate — a shift from his position Tuesday that a gas tax pause would require replacement revenue (See "[Hall: No Gas Tax Cut Without Replacement Revenue](#)," 9/29/26).

Speaking to reporters at Belle Isle Park this afternoon, Whitmer said the federal government needs to end the war with Iran and provide immediate relief.

"I know that Michiganders are hurting because the war in Iran has jacked up costs, as have tariffs and all this nonsense about vilifying Canada," Whitmer said. "The federal government needs to fix this."

Whitmer supports suspending the federal gas tax. Asked whether she would veto a state-level suspension this fall, she declined to commit.

"I'm not going to weigh in on stuff that I may or may not ever see at my desk," she said.

"We're taking a look and see if there are other things that we can do to help people."

Whitmer did not identify the alternatives her office is considering.

Senate Democrats see the debate over a state gas tax pause as a problem of President Donald **TRUMP**'s making. He started the war in Iran. The Straits of Hormuz have been closed, preventing the shipment of oil from a critical location on the globe. Supply is down. Prices are up.

The debate about pausing the gas tax centers on whether motorists would receive the full savings and how Michigan would replace the lost road funding. One fiscal analyst's preliminary estimate puts the cost of a 90-day suspension of the state tax on gasoline and diesel at close to \$700 million.

At least one Senate Democrat questioned whether suspending the tax would deliver the relief supporters expect.

"Just because you suspend the state gas tax, that doesn't change the price," said Sen. [Jeff IRWIN \(D-Ann Arbor\)](#), who spoke with reporters after session.

Irwin argued that gas stations could raise their prices to absorb the tax savings rather than pass them along to motorists. He also said electric vehicle drivers would continue paying an additional registration fee intended to offset lost gas tax revenue while gasoline buyers received a temporary break.

During House session last week, Democrats tried to discharge legislation from Rep. [Phil SKAGGS \(D-Grand Rapids\)](#) that would suspend the gas tax and replace the lost revenue with money from the Rainy Day Fund. Republicans blocked the effort.

Concern that Senate Democrats might move ahead with a suspension prompted alarm among Lansing lobbyists last night (see "[Concerns Mounting That Senate Will Take Up 90-Day Gas Tax Pause](#)" 9/30/26).

Other states have pursued similar relief as gasoline prices approached \$5 a gallon last week. Ohio Gov. Mike **DEWINE** signed an emergency gas tax suspension into law.

Several candidates at the top of Michigan's November ballot have called for suspending both the federal and state gas taxes, including Republican gubernatorial nominee John **JAMES**, Republican U.S. Senate nominee Mike **ROGERS** and Democratic Senate nominee Abdul **EL-SAYED**.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee [Jocelyn BENSON](#) has opposed a state gas tax suspension because of its budget impact, while supporting a federal suspension.